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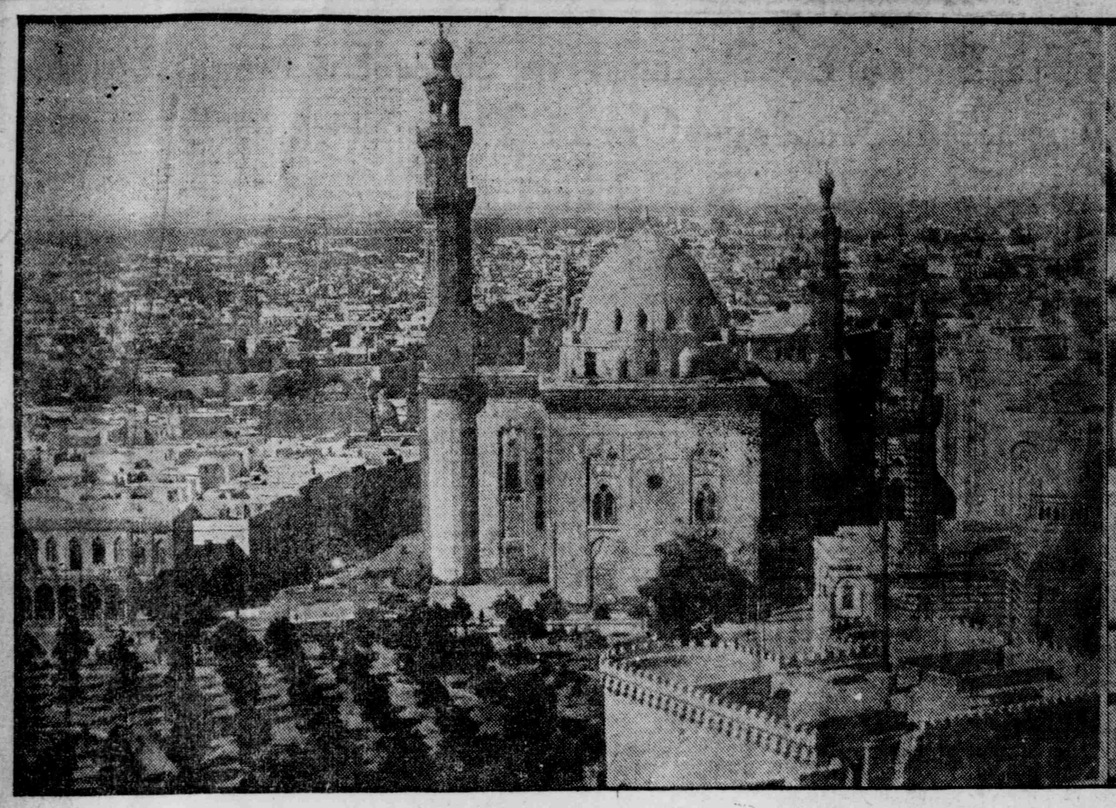
MAGAZINE SECTION.

"Government of Egypt Defies Definition."

By William Jennings Bryan.



The City of Cairo.

Taking Water from the Nile.

Jaffa, April 23.—The first article on Egypt might have been begun with an account of our stay in quarantine, but as this precaution against the spread of Asiatic diseases is of modern origin, I thought it best to speak of it in this article.

The P. & O. steamer Persia, which brought us from Bombay to Egypt, was suspected of having four cases of plague on board. One man having died and been buried at sea just before we reached Suez, and three more being ill, the international health board insisted on taking charge of the ten passengers bound for Egypt. We were taken on board a barge and towed a couple of miles up the Suez canal to the quarantine station, which we reached about midnight.

Besides the four in our family, there were three Americans from Ohio, two English merchants from Egypt and an English lady engaged in missionary work in Palestine. We were comfortably housed in one-story brick buildings and were informed that we would have to remain there five days unless further investigation removed the suspicion of the plague. While the members of the company proved to be very congenial, we were all anxious to have the stay shortened as much as possible on account of its interference with our plans.

At the end of two days we were notified that a bubonic germ had been discovered and that we must stay the full time. The quarantine station is situated on the bank of the canal and is surrounded on three sides by as barren a desert as can be found. The buildings are enclosed by a double fence, and the only exit is to the wharf through a lane. We were permitted to go to the wharf and, under the escort of a guard, were allowed to gather shells on the bank of the canal. Thus occupied when not reading or writing, the days passed much more pleasantly than we had expected, and we were almost sorry when the time came for us to separate. One day our quarters were visited by a sirroco, and from the dust and sand that filled the air until the sun was darkened we were able to gain some idea of desert life.

The canal itself is a little disappointing. It is simply a huge ditch, and with an expanse of sand on either bank, seems narrower than it is. The sides are not walled as a rule, and the depth—30 feet—does not reveal itself. Several dredges are constantly at work removing the sand which drifts in with the wind or is washed in by the tide. The canal is said to follow the route laid out more than 3,000 years ago by Rameses II. About 3,500 ships pass through the canal each year, an average of nearly ten a day. Somewhat more than that passed during our stay, some of the ships being loaded with Russian soldiers from Japan, and others crowded with pilgrims returning from Mecca.

On the afternoon of the fifth day the head physician came out and released us and at the same time conveyed to us the cheerful, but somewhat belated information that the three men taken from the ship did not have the plague; we had, however, been so courteously treated that we did not complain of the board bills or quarantine fees, even though the detention proved unnecessary. The spread of the plague through Europe would be such a calamity that we realize it is better to err on the side of over-caution. At any rate, we have added to our experience and are carrying the yellow flag (the quarantine signal) home as a trophy.

* * *

A few hours' ride brought us to Cairo, the metropolis and capital of Egypt. It is not an ancient city, as they count time in Egypt, having been founded about 1,000 years ago, but it has in the business portion the appearance of a European city and contains a population of more than half a million. Of its inhabitants 35,000 are European, the Greeks leading with about 10,000, and the Italians, French, English, Austrians and Germans following in the order named. The British would outnumber the French if the garrison were included, but the city reminds one much more of France than of England. Many of the buildings reall the streets of Paris, and the sidetalks adjacent to restaurants and saloons are filled with tables and chairs as in continental Europe.

Cairo is a city of mosques and minarets, as one quickly discovers when he takes a bird's-eye view of the city from the citadel, which stands upon an eminence in the suburbs. While the main streets are suggestive of Europe, the native quarters and bazars are distinctly oriental, many of the streets being too narrow for a carriage. The shops are for the most part little open booths, and each line of business has its particular section. On one street silver and goldsmiths monopolize the space; another street is gay with red shoes; in another the red fez, the universal hat, is conspicuous; and still another is given over to vegetables. Some of the larger stores handle Persian rugs, silks, brass ware, inlaid work and patchwork reproducing the drawings found on tombs and temples. The bazars also abound in interesting reminders of the land of the mummy, the pyramid and the sphinx.

We had not been in Cairo long before we visited the banks of the Nile, that wonderful river without whose fructifying waters there would have been no Egypt. It is one of the most remarkable—in some respects the most remarkable—of all the rivers of the earth. No wonder the ancient Egyptians included a Nile god among their deities, for next to the sun, to which they raised their obelisks, nothing was so necessary to their existence as this almost magic stream. The Nile renders fertile two narrow strips, one on either bank, 4,000 miles long and but a few miles wide. For 1,300 miles it flows through a desert and receives but a single tributary in that distance, and yet, after supplying irrigation for the crops of some 10,000,000 of people, it pours into the ocean a scarcely dimished stream. The annual rise of the river not only supplies water, but it renews the land by deposits of alluvial soil.

Some one has described the Nile valley as appearing, if seen from above, like a strip of green carpet on a floor of gold, so yellow are the sands that hem it in. No one who has not visited an arid country and noted the influence of water upon the thirsty soil can imagine how distinctly the line is drawn between the verdant field and the barren desert that adjoins it. Where the waters of the Nile can be brought upon the land, a farm will rent for $30 per acre, while a few feet away the land cannot be given away. Lord Cromer in a recent report gives the income and expenditure of a number of the fellaheen, or farmers. The statements show that $100 worth of cotton is sometimes produced from a single acre or about $30 worth of corn. The average income, taking all crops together, often runs as high as $50 per acre.

An increasing quantity of land is being brought under the canals; but irrigation from wells is still the main reliance of a large proportion of the people. Water can be found at the level of the water in the river, and the landscape is dotted over with old-fashioned well sweeps and with water wheels where blindfolded camels or oxen tread their patient round. The land produces so abundantly and there is such a variety of garden and farm products that one recalls that passage in the Bible in which the children of Israel are described as longing for "the fleshpots of Egypt." Coming from India to Egypt we could not but notice the difference in the appearance of the people. In the former country they looked so emaciated and hungry; in the latter they are strong and robust, and seemingly well fed. In the markets, too, the food is heaped up in big baskets, while in India it is exposed for sale in tiny piles that speak only too plainly of the poverty of the people.

For ages upon ages the fellah has drawn from the inexhaustible storehouse of the Nile. Cheops, Kephren and theis successors built pyramids, and the fellah fed the builders; Thutmosis and Sethos and their descendants constructed tombs and temples, and the fellah supported the laborers; the Rameses added gigantic statues to the stupendous works of their ancestors, and the fellah still furnished food; the Persians overran the country, and still the hand of the fellah supplied the necessaries of life; then came Alexander the Great, and the Ptolemies, Caesar, Antony and Cleopatra, and the fellah plowed on; after the Roman came the Arab, and after the Arab the Turk, followed by Napoleon and later by the Briton, but through all this change of dynasties the fellah kept "the noiseless tenor of his way," and as a middle man, handed over the bounties of the Nile valley to the rulers and their armies—and he is doing so today. Of the 1,100,000 land owners, nearly 950,000 hold less than five acres each, and almost half of the total acreage is owned by 12,300 persons. More than one-tenth of the tillable land is owned by 1,600 Europeans.

Very few horses are seen in the country, the beasts of burden being the ox (there are a few water buffaloes also), the donkey and the camel. The ox resembles the American rather than the Indian ox in that it has no hump on its shoulders and the drawings on some of the walls represent cattle with horns as large as those formerly worn by the Texas steer. The donkey—poor, patient creature—has not changed materially in the last 4,000 years. The pictures drawn of him by the ancient Egyptians show him just as he is now. Then, as now, a large part of his nourishment went to the development of his vocal organs and left the rest of his body woefully small for the large burdens which he was called upon to carry. If his disposition was as gloomy in the days of the Pharaohs as it is at present, he probably annoyed them when he lifted up his voice and wept as he now annoys the tourist.

The camel, however, if the test is special fitness for the country, is the king of beasts. He pulls the plow, turns the water wheel, draws the wagon, carries burdens and for long distance travel outstrips the horse. Equipped with emergency water tanks, he can go for several days without drinking, and for this reason is of inestimable value on desert journeys. He kneels to receive his load, though sometimes with pathetic groans, and is as docile as the horse. He has sometimes been styled "the ship of the desert," and seems to have been fashioned for this peculiar region. His large padded feet do not add to his beauty, but they enable him to cross sandy plains into which a horse's hoof would sink.

The Bible says that the plague of flies brought upon Egypt when Moses was endeavoring to secure the release of the Israelites was removed when Pharaoh promised to let the people go, but one is inclined to think that they afterward returned when Pharaoh again hardened his heart, for nowhere have we found flies like those of Egypt. They bite with unusual vigor and are very persistent in their attentions. At first we thought it strange that people should carry horse-hair brushes as a protection against the flies, but we were soon driven to follow their example. These flies seem to be especially attracted to the eyes of children. As these flies, like those in other countries, carry disease, it is not strange that sore eyes should be especially prevalent here. Blindness seems to be more common than elsewhere, and a very considerable percentage of the people have lost one eye. So widespread is this affliction that Sir Ernest Cassel has established a fund of 40,000 pounds sterling, the interest on which is to be devoted to the treatment of diseases of the eye. Already the fruits of this beneficence are being enjoyed by the poor. The Mohammedan women in Egypt wear veils—a custom which is but slowly giving way to western ideas; if the eyes of the children were protected with half as much care as the faces of the women, what benefits would result!

The government of Egypt defies definition. Nominally, the khedive is the supreme authority, aided by a native legislative council and assembly (their business is to advise, however, rather than to legislate), but back of the khedive is Lord Cromer, the agent and consul general of England, whose power is undefined and almost unlimited. England's authority in Egypt rests upon the articles of capitulation signed after the bombardment of Alexandria in 1882. In these articles it was announced that England's occupancy would be of brief duration, but in 1904 she secured from France, Germany, Austria-Hungary and Italy consent to postpone the fixing of a date for her withdrawal, she at the same time announcing that it was not her intention to interfere with the political situation in Egypt.

England's reasons for remaining in Egypt are very clearly stated by Lord Milner in his book entitled "England in Egypt." He says: "On the one hand, our commercial interests in Egypt are so great and growing that her prosperity, which would be immediately wrecked by misgovernment, is a matter of concern to us. Seconcly, and chiefly, the geographical position of Egypt compels attention to her political condition. We have nothing to gain by owning the country ourselves, but we should have a great deal to fear from its falling into the possession of another power."

England's interests in Egypt are numerous. She takes most of the exports of Egypt and sells more than any other country to Egypt. In the last report of Lord Cromer it is shown that Great Britain has the benefit of considerably more than half of the contracts (above $5,000) entered into by the Egyptian railways for supplies. Then, England's citizens own land in Egypt and they are also interested in the Egyptian debt, which, by the way, amounts to about $500,000,000, or, approximately, $100 per acre of the tillable land.

The irrigation schemes now developing will require the expenditure of large sums on contract and these will give opportunities for English capital.

The second reason given by Lord Milner is emphasized by him and is probably the paramount one, viz., that she cannot afford to have the valley of the Nile held by a rival power. Her interests in the Soudan and in India lead her to guard the Suez canal with jealous care. Lord Milner suggests as a reason why England should remain in Egypt that her withdrawal might be followed by such an abuse of government as to lead to bankruptcy and French intervention. The old argument, "if we don't do it somebody else will," is presented as the strongest support of British interference.

English influence, however, has been less harmful in Egypt than in India, and this is probably due, in the main, to two causes; first, her influence is exerted through a native government, whose authority she acknowledges; and second, because the interests which other nations have in Egypt make them oppose any encroachments on the part of England, while in India she has a free hand. As an illustration I might cite the fact that she compels the Indian to support the Indian army while she pays the ordinary expenses of the 3,000 British soldiers in Egypt and only asks Egypt to pay for the extraordinary expenses. It is no reflection upon England to say that she is better for being watched. We believe that in regard to our own public men, and it is simply a recognition of the frailty of human nature. Lord Cromer has been in Egypt for twenty-six years, and his reports indicate a desire to advance the welfare of the people of Egypt. He has doubtless been helpful to the khedive. He has insisted upon honesty in the public service and has been a friend of education.

While the national debt contains a large amount of usurious interest and is therefore much heavier than it ought to be, it has been funded at a lower rate of interest and is being gradually paid off. The debts that are being incurred for the extension of irrigation will be more than redeemed by the sale of the land reclaimed, and the country will then have the benefit, not only of the reclaimed land but of the increased value of lands indirectly benefitted. Although the salt tax (contrary to Lord Cromer's advice) is still over 200 per cent, the per capita rate of taxation has been reduced; agricultural and postal banks have been established, and the government railway telegraph and telephone systems have been extended. In his 1903 report Lord Cromer presents an argument in favor of government roads as against roads owned privately.

The great danger that Egypt has to fear is the disinheritance of the fellah and the alien ownership of the land. Unless great care is taken Egypt will drift into the condition of Ireland and India and be drained of her resources by foreign landlords. It is very difficult for a foreign representative to arbitrate impartially between his own people at home and the natives among whom he temporarily resides, and Lord Cromer will deserve great credit if he is able to protect the Egyptians from exploitation. However well meaning the English advisers are now or hereafter may be, Egypt's safety must lie in the development of her own people. The legislative council understands this and insists upon the extension of the school system. It is wise in so doing, for every educated man or woman adds to the moral force that restrains and directs the government.

An increase in the number of the educated not only tends to the preservation of law and order, but furnishes a larger number fit to be officials, and thus lessens the excuse for the employment of foreigners. There has been, among reformers, some discussion of a constitution, but as that would curtail the powers of the khedive as well as define the authority of England, it would probably be opposed at present by the Moslem leaders.

I cannot conclude without a reference to the pioneer work done in the field of education by the United Presbyterians. They have several churches and a number of very successful schools and must be credited with having contributed largely to the progress which Egypt has made and is making.

CALLED BY EARTHQUAKE.

Traveler Had Overslept and Had Just Time to Catch Train.

(New York Sun.)

"It took me several months to get used to the spasmodic quivers or small earthquake shocks so frequent in California," said a traveling man, who, like so many others, mourns for the beautiful San Fransico that was. "In the early part of December, 1904, I was visiting San Francisco for the first time, and the first earthquake shock after my arrival proved a pretty severe jolt along about 1 a. m. Four days later I enjoyed the novel experience of being called by an earthquake.

"I had a very important engagement in San Jose, fifty miles to the south, and there was a train leaving precisely at 8 a. m. by the Coast line from the station at Third and Townsend streets. This train reaches San Jose shortly before 10.

"My appointment, very important for me, was at 11. There was only one morning train to San Jose, and it was absolutely necessary for me to catch that 8 o'clock train; yet I relied upon my habit of always getting awake early, and so did not leave a call with the hotel clerk.

"Of course I overslept. At 7:20 on that morning—the date was Dec. 15, 1904, and the quake of that morning can easily be verified—I was fast asleep in my bed in the St. Francis. At 7:23 there came a distinct and very pronounced jolt, which rumbled the glassware, rattled the furniture and gave my bed such a severe shock that I jumped up expecting another and more severe shock immediately.

"But except for that one big shock, strong enough to shake things without doing much damage, the earthquake faded away. I waited a minute or so, and then took my watch from under the pillow to see what time it was.

Great Scott! When I saw the time I forgot all about earthquakes in my anxiety to get dressed quickly and make that train. At 7:30 I was dressed and flying down the hill on Powell street to catch a car. I stopped in a lunch room for a cup of coffee, caught a slow car, which seemed never to hurry, and reached the Townsend Street depot at 7:58.

"There was a line at the ticket window, but I rushed ahead of everyone, bought my ticket and dashed through the gate just as the 8 o'clock train was pulling out. I had to run to catch the rear car, but fortunately I swung aboard the rear platform, got to San Jose in time for my appointment and found that the earthquake had done more damage there than it had in San Francisco, as fifty chimneys had been toppled over.

"That was the first and only time I was ever called by an earthquake, and I believe it is the only incident of the kind ever recorded which can be proved to be absolutely true. If that earthquake had been two minutes later I would have missed my train and a very big business deal in San Jose.

HAVE YOU ONE?

(Chicago News.)

Little Willie—Say, pa, what is a mutual friend?

Pa—A mutual friend, my son, is one who makes it his business to keep you informed of the mean things your other friends say about you.

DO YOU BELIEVE IN GHOSTS?

BY MARGARET E. SANGSTER.

The ghost who used to haunt old houses and take up his abode in a favorite room, ruining it for the comfortable living of flesh and blood people, is quite out of date. That old-fashioned specter had a most objectionable way of stalking about the corridors and issuing out of shadowy corners at unexpected seasons. He was a nebulous, vague sort of person who diffused an atmosphere of chill, and was distinctly weird and uncanny. One was usually informed that this ghost had either been murdered or had committed a murder, and that he or she was, therefore, condemned for all time to wander about the scenes of the earthly life.

I have never had the doubtful pleasure of encountering a ghost myself, but I have had friends who had hobnobbed with ghosts of the queer, old-fashioned variety, and who described their sensations with much definiteness, as they recalled their meetings with the supernatural visitors.

Sometimes the ghosts glided around, making no sound. I never heard that they spoke, but they were given to rustling curtains and making slight noises, not unlike the spirit rappings that a generation ago excited thousands of people in Europe and America. Often the appearance of a family ghost heralded a calamity or a death, and those today who study psychic phenomena claim that such warnings are not uncommon still.

A picturesque story is told about an Irish country house. It was a great house, famous for hospitality and the hosts were never happier than when many guests were assembled under their roof. There was a wide hall at one end of which was an open fireplace which was made the social center for young and old, particularly at the hour of 5 o'clock tea. Opposite this, at the other end of the hall, there was a staircase leading to a gallery into which opened the doors of various guests. One rainy afternoon, when the fun was at its height, a lady observed a little figure wearing a red cloak with a hood concealing the head and face. This woman, who seemed to be young, quickly passed the groups of people, none of whom took any notice, being occupied with themselves and the story of the day.

The little figure in the red cloak went upstairs, opened the door of a certain room and entered. The room was that of a very popular officer who at the moment was the gayest of the gay in the circle around the fire. At dinner that evening the lady who had seen the visitant, being seated next her host, casually mentioned the incident and asked who it was in the neighborhood who came and went with such freedom, wearing a scarlet cloak. The host turned very pale, gave a vague reply and changed the subject. No wonder, for the visitor was no less a personage than the immemorial family banshee, who never crossed the threshold or entered any room unless to foretell the untimely death of one she had singled out. This death was sure to happen during the next twelvemonth. It was as if the judge had put on the black cap. The story runs that the captain whose room the banshee selected died in battle not long afterward.

* * *

A friend who spent her childhood in the south, where she heard familiarly the superstitious tales of her old mammy and of other negro servants, says that not for worlds would she have passed a certain turn in the road after nightfall or walked through a certain wood beyond the garden. She feared the presence of the ghosts who slipped about there under moonlight and starlight. More than once, she tells me, she met ghosts in high-heeled slippers and satin gowns stealing to and fro in the halls of her home, or standing by the window in her room, but she had no fear of them, and indeed regarded them with pride as conferring a sort of dignity on the house.

Another friend, a woman intensely modern and practical, informed me that twice in her life she had seen, very plainly and clearly, in broad daylight, the forms of her children who had passed away. Once when thrown fro ma carriage she fell on a green bank by the roadside and was for an instant unconscious. As she came to herself she saw close to her the beautiful little daughter who had left her for heaven nine years earlier; the child wore a pink gingham frock and a frilled white sunbonnet and her hands were full of flowers. She smiled reassuringly at her mother, as much as to say, "Don't be afraid; nothing shall harm you." The other occasion was not extraordinary, but was unexpected. Simply opening the door of her drawing-room on a June morning, the lady saw between the window and the mantel her soldier son in full uniform, pacing as if on guard. Years ago he had gone to sleep with other men-at-arms, and the memory of his was growing faint except in the home that had lost its chief pride, when the bullet that killed him sent a permanent ache to the hearts of those who loved him. After a moment this vision faded, but the mother felt a thrill half awe and half rapture, for while wide awake and in full possession of her senses she had been given a glimpse of her boy.

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No explanation of ghostly phenomena is wholly satisfactory. Literal and matter-of-fact people utterly refuse to believe that anybody has ever seen a ghost. Others inclining more readily to the supersensitive and idealistic side of our nature are not so swift in their skepticism.

A book published some years ago by an eminent physician of Boston recorded many examples of strange things heard by men and women of established veracity who had confided their experiences to investigators or had given permission to the doctor to use them in his volume. In one case a man all his life a lover of music was entertained during a protracted illness by supernatural performers who glided into his room between the hours between midnight and dawn, arranged themselves with their instruments around his bed, and played delicious airs from his favorite operas, playing with a power and skill not surpassed on the stage.

Whether or not we are disposed to accept as literally true stories of ghosts and specters, or whether ghostlore and its kindred fairy-lore possess no attractions for us, we all more or less believe in brain currents, the wireless telegraphy sweeping between souls and spanning seas and continents in the twinkling of an eye. The truth is, each of us is, in a sense, a ghost carrying about mortal habiliments or, shall we say, cribbed, cabined and confined in a corporal body.

Eastern sages find an alluring magnetism in imagining the soul set free at times from this hampering shell, and allowed to wander at will through the universe. In the days of the Salem witchcraft, New England puritanism believed very much the same thing. But twentieth century daylight on occidental shores is too strong to permit the recognition of such footless by-play on the souls who are tethered to their bodies until the angel of death shall dissolve the union.

But who can resist the testimony of telepathy? To make its commonest illustration, let us peep into the postman's bag. You have a friend in Texas and you reside in Maine, or in Nevada and your home is in New York. Your friend and yourself have held no communication for years. Floating out of space comes to you with insistent force the thought of your friend. Something impels you to write a letter and send it with its message to break the silence. About the time that your letter appears on your friend's breakfast table a return letter has crossed it and appears on yours. There is not one of us who has not had this experience many a time. We cannot explain it, but whether or not souls are securely fastened in bodies, thoughts are free to wander as they will over the wide earth and to the farthest planet.

EXTRA PRECAUTION.

(Chicago News.)

"Stranger in town, eh?" ventured the New York man who was standing on the corner of Halsted and Taylor streets.

"Yes, by gum!" drawled the old farmer with the yellow valise. "And Cynthia sewed my pockets up twice befare she would let me come to Chicago."

"Ha ha! That's pretty good on Chicago. You bet she wouldn't have to sew your pockets up twice if you were going to New York."

"No, by heck! She would sew them up three or four times."

SOME GOOD ADVICE.

People Who Are About to Travel on Ocean Liners Should Take Notice.

(Chicago Record-Herald.)

Beware of large and beautiful blonde ladies who hanker to play bridge whist.

Look out for "gents" who wear dark mustaches and claim to be friends of C. M. Schwab.

Run when you are approached by a man in clerical garb who offers to let you have a half interest in a wonderful mine which he has discovered if you will promise never to tell anybody else where it is.

Keep your hand on your watch.

Don't permit dark-eyed, beautiful little ladies whom you don't know to sit behind you and see your cards when you are playing poker with other strangers.

Don't lend large sums of money to people whom you have never seen before.

Carefully avoid shaking dice for big amounts with unknown men who offer to furnish the dice.

Do not be induced to bet that you can tell which shell the pea is under.

It is well to keep away from strangers who insist on putting their hands in your pockets whenever you happen to fall into a doze.

If your wife is with you let her carry your cash in her stocking.

Beware of sweet, beautiful ladies who smoke cigarettes, use poor grammar and "long to be loved by somebody who is noble and generous."

Go to bed early.

Don't bet on anything, not even that you are alive or that the ship is surrounded by water.

Don't fret if you happen to be so seasick that you can't leave your berth. Nobody is likely to break in and take your money away from you there.

IF YOU WERE A BOY.

(Catholic Standard.)

If you were a boy this morning,
I wonder what you would do?
Was ever a day more perfect,
Was ever a day more blue?
I'm speaking to you, grave senior,
I noticed you as you went
Hot-footing it into the city,
To add to your cent per cent.
I noticed your sober manner,
Your very important looks,
And I noticed your boy beside you,
The schoolboy with his books.
I saw—and you saw—where the river
Sweeps down to the "swimmin' hole,"
Another boy playing "hookey"—
A boy with a fishing pole.

If you were a boy this morning,
I wonder what you would do?
I saw you stooping to whisper
A word to the boy with you.
It seemed to me then you told him
That the truant boy was a fool,
That nothing ripens manhood
Like the moments spent in school.
With the fresh blue sky above you
And the green fields under it,
How dare you utter such nonsense?
O liar and hypocrite!
If you were a boy this morning,
A boy with a heart and soul,
You'd be in spite of a licking,
The boy with the fishing pole.